

CONSTRUCTIVE THINKING

CONSTRUCTIVE THINKING

By
H. ERNEST HUNT

Author of
"HOW TO TRAIN THE MEMORY," "HOW TO USE YOUR MIND,"
"PRACTICAL PSYCHO-ANALYSIS," &c., &c.

A GUIDE TO
THE ART
OF CLEAR
THINKING



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CHAPTER I

THE POWER OF THOUGHT

IT is impossible to over-estimate the importance of thought. We ourselves are built of our thoughts, fashioned by them, and moulded by their influence. The way in which we have used the power of thought has placed us in our present position, be it satisfactory or the reverse ; it has chosen our line of work for us and selected our friends. Our health and wellbeing are in no small measure the product of the same force, and certainly our prospects are all the while being directly influenced by the way we think.

Individuals group themselves into larger units, families, firms, organisations, and companies ; or they band themselves together by townships, shires, nations, and

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tongues. Then the sum of the individual thinking produces the mass-thought. The way in which the group thinks begins to determine the line of its actions, and its actions produce results; these are then mirrored in concrete things, in laws and ordinances, in organisations, social, industrial, religious, and political. The effect of the working of all these is to determine the general well-being of the group and of its individuals.

But no individual, or group, however large, is a completely self-contained unit; it must always be part of a larger whole. It follows, therefore, that what the individual thinks must in degree affect the whole, while the individual himself is most intimately concerned in the prosperity of the larger unit of which he is part. Thus in the last issue progress and advancement depend upon your thinking and mine, and it is vitally important that we should learn to make the very best use of this extraordinary power.

Nobody can possibly avoid thinking of

some kind, for the very world in which we live is impressing us all day long through one or other of the senses. These impressions hit us or harass us, please us, stimulate or depress us ; but in any case they prevent us going to sleep. But merely to allow thought to "run itself" is just about as intelligent as to permit a head of steam to escape without doing any work, or to allow a stream of water to wander instead of harnessing its horse-power. If thought is not definitely controlled and directed, it generally succeeds in doing at the very least as much harm as good.

Now, there are definite ways and directions in which we can learn how to think, and make specific use of this power. All things that have been made or done in this world have had thought as their beginning and their constructive influence throughout ; and if all things in the past are due to it, we may certainly argue that all things in the future will be so. Obviously, then, the learning of the way in which to think, and

of the directions in which its power may be most profitably employed, is a most important thing. The perusal of such a little book as this, with the putting of its principles into practice, may very well be a turning-point in the life of the reader. But the book of itself can do nothing ; it cannot confer success upon its purchaser or guarantee him the ability to think. It can, however, show him just what to do and how to do it ; and after that it is for the individual to do the work.

When we learn how to harness and control our thoughts we are in possession of a force which can be turned to any desired end. And upon its momentum and direction must depend the ultimate results. We can concentrate upon health and gain better health, to say nothing of saving doctors' and chemists' bills. The Christian Scientists do this and are considered specially good " risks " from the Life Insurance point of view ; they live longer. But they have no monopoly of the

power of thought, they merely have—as you and I have also—the power to select the thoughts they think.

We can turn this power on to building more happiness in life both for ourselves and for other people. But the simple desire to achieve more happiness may merely land us in greater unhappiness unless we have sufficient understanding to go the right way about it. The right use of thought will gradually develop this. It will unfold our latent abilities and teach us of the extraordinary powers that are the heritage of every child born into the world, no matter what his material circumstances.

Education as we have it to-day unfolds these powers in only a half-hearted fashion, because no specific instruction is given either in the power of thought or how to use it. But when we learn this we can quickly reduce any handicap of early educational deficiencies, and even advance at a more rapid rate than those who have had greater advantages.

Thought is a business-builder, and the progress of our industry and commerce depends upon the quality and enterprise of the thought of its leaders. But this must be backed up by the individual thinking of the rank and file ; nobody can afford to put out his thinking to be done for him like his washing. Lack of thought means waste in some form or other, and waste in any form is economically unjustifiable and exacts its own penalties. We each of us have a power in thought, and power cannot be divorced from responsibility ; and the greater the power the greater the corresponding responsibility. When you have learned how to think wisely and well you will have a correspondingly greater obligation to yourself and to the community to use that power for good.

In business, for example, you can use it selfishly to bring you greater profits at the expense of your customers or your workers : this use of power unworthily can be guaranteed in the long run to smash the mistaken

individual and bring him down in the ruins of his own business. Or you can use it for greater service all round, as Henry Ford himself has shown is possible. And if you read his books *My Life and Work* and *To-Day and To-morrow*, you will learn for yourself of the amount of carefully directed thinking that has gone to the accomplishing of his very wonderful results.

All the outstanding figures in the worlds of industry, invention, and commerce have had their struggles, difficulties, and handicaps; and these very difficulties have developed their strength. They have been taught how to think in the very hard school of experience, and it is the power of developed and concentrated thinking which has carried them up the ladder of progress. They did not start by thinking "I can't do this" or "I can't do that," but on the contrary they began by determining to make good at whatever cost. Difficulties were things to be got over, not shirked. The croakers were people to be disregarded, not listened to. Work

was a thing to be welcomed, not merely reduced to a minimum. Not one of them had the cushy job or the motto of "Safety First"; they were out to fight a winning battle against odds, and they won it. And in the fighting they were promoted to the captaincy of their own souls. Read the book *Kings of Commerce* by Bridges and Tiltman, and you will see something of what I mean.

Again you can turn this force into channels that will bring about the development of character, and remember that character is the one thing that may be truly said to be yours. It is *you*, and it must go wherever you go, to whatever worlds or realms there may be. Money, houses, land, pomp, honour and things of to-day can reach no farther than the nearest cemetery or crematorium; but character is a fine-forged spiritual thing that lives on. Yet the machinery that goes to the making of this is the same which builds the business, the happiness, or the health. It is all a matter of the direction. The saints of the world have directed their

thinking upwards far beyond the self, and in losing themselves in a wider selflessness they have gained everything. But make no mistake, these have had no special powers with which you yourself are not gifted ; they used their ability to think, and it is for us to do the same.

This, then, is why in these few pages I shall put forward some of the ways to set about the utilising of the power of thought ; and to read this book is to put your foot upon the first rung of the ladder. **You can alter things and circumstances ; you can alter yourself. You can become a builder. You can leave the ranks of the dissatisfied and join those of the more prosperous.** There will be no miracles, but there will be just logical cause and effect, law and order. I can only help by showing the way ; I cannot do the work for you, and I would not if I could. You grow your muscles by your own climbing, and you work out your own salvation by effort and the exercise of your own ability to think.

CHAPTER II

THE STREAM OF THOUGHT

THOUGHT is an ever-flowing river, and the mind is its channel. This is far truer than the old idea that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. While we are in the world and awake an incessant rush of impression keeps the mind moving; and indeed one of the higher lessons we have to learn in mind-control is to keep the mind poised and quiet. There is also a stream of impression while we are asleep, but of it we are not conscious; it is not subject to the control of the waking reason, having a subconscious logic of its own. But, waking or sleeping, this stream runs on and on, and we cannot make it cease.

Just as the engineer learns to harness the river between its banks, and by his various plans and devices controlling its power and

setting it to accomplish useful work, so also we are able to regulate and control the stream of thought which we are powerless to stop. The main flow of this stream has graven channels in our brain, and there are other tracks where the thoughts have flowed less frequently. These represent our habits and our casual actions. But there is nothing final about any channel or track, and as a rule—like Topsy—they have “just growed”: in comparatively few cases have they been the subject of deliberate planning and choice.

Now, the engineer must always indulge in a preliminary survey to get some definite idea of the problem to be tackled and the work to be done. Perhaps he sees that the river must be diverted from its old channel and turned into a new one. This does not dismay him, for it is just a simple question of engineering which presents no particular difficulty; it means work of course, but he is prepared for that. Much the same situation confronts us in the realm of mind. This river of thought already has its channels;

some of them may be good and useful, but others are less so. The average man will quickly realise that many new channels have to be dug before he can hope for practical results. This is just what he must expect, and there is no particular difficulty, but he must count on having to put in definite work.

Thought, unlike the river, cannot be safely and permanently dammed. It is useless for us to say to ourselves, "Now, I won't think this or that," for the effect is merely to repress and push the thought back for a time, and then suddenly with its accumulated force it brushes aside every obstacle and floods the mind. **The secret is simplicity itself: if you do not want to think one thing, think something else instead.** Your conscious mind is only constructed to deal with one thing adequately at a time, and therefore if you are concentrating your attention on the thing you want, the thing you do not want must recede into the background. **Make a consistent habit of "draining" the thoughts from the**

the mind ; even the best of us will find much to alter and refashion. Time and again during the day you will find thoughts in the mind that can do no possible good. Check the number of times you find yourself saying " I can't " or " I'm afraid." Note how many times the temper rises and the self-control diminishes, how often you doubt or go down to depression. How frequent is the disparaging word, the futile complaint, the " fed-up " feeling, the " don't-care-a-damn " spirit, or the " anything-will-do " compromise, and so on. How many go in fear of petty ailments and colds, financial difficulties, and old age ; and how many are on the look-out for slights and insults to their supposed dignity. How many again can always see difficulties and never the possibilities, and how many hate the new idea. When you have run through this catalogue you will have some idea of the type of thought that runs through the mind of the average individual, and you will see the work that has to be done.

Choose better, and dig a new channel. Habit has made the river run thus. Man is a habit-making animal and can make new habits. **Overcome the evil with good, and for the negative thought substitute the positive.** Instead of thinking "I can't," hold in mind the thought "I can"; this in itself sets you to meet the events of life at a different angle, with a differing result. The man who thinks he can't is really beaten before ever he starts, while the man with the positive attitude begins with a tremendous advantage. I would not say that if you think you can, you invariably can; but at any rate if you think you can't, you have not even an outsider's chance.

If you are afraid, build a little robust courage into the stream of thought; it will put healthy red corpuscles into the bloodstream also and you will feel better. What are you afraid of? Have it out with yourself; don't go down to a bogey that is only filled with straw. Are you afraid of going



which you can start at once. Side-track the undesirable thoughts, and think better in their stead. Substitute and divert. Look at the past if you like, and learn its lessons, but for goodness' sake don't live in it. Get a broom and sweep away regrets, might-have-beens, disappointments, shortcomings, and anything else you like ; and then sit down and become an engineer planning the future as you would wish it. But it is the river that is going to do the actual work, not yourself. I don't suppose that you could turn a waterwheel if you tried, but the river can, and you control the sluices.

CHAPTER III

HOW THOUGHT WORKS

HAVING seen that we have power to control the stream of thought which flows through mind, it is necessary for us to know how and why this stream achieves its results, and here comes in the vital importance of memory. The grey matter of the brain is said to be plastic, and it is moulded and rearranged in subtle fashion by the thoughts. When a river first rises and then recedes, it leaves its tide-marks and its ripples ; it has rearranged the particles of sand or soil upon the banks, and that rearrangement remains. So in some like fashion the brain is different after the thought has traversed it, and it remains different. The structure of our nervous system is being modified by the things we think.

Thinking is a force which produces effects ; it works. But feeble thinking produces small results ; while strong, clear, intense thought makes a correspondingly marked effect. Thought, long held in mind and dwelt upon, has a strong result. In the former case the attack is by shock tactics, and in the latter by the wearing-down process. This modification of brain and nervous structure is the physical basis of memory ; and the importance of thought lies in memory which stores and records, like to like, each individual thought.

We might at once put the matter on a still deeper basis, for modern science is joining with ancient philosophy in assigning true memory to a deeper stratum of existence. The poet-seer affirmed that " memory is the scribe of the soul," and psychic research and other investigations are showing that it is true. If thought is thus registered in the soul which survives the passing change of death, then we must accord to thinking an importance beyond almost any other activity.

Thoughts are recorded, like to like, and through intensity or reiteration some thoughts become stronger than the rest. They tend to dominate the others, behaving exactly as the stronger and more forceful individuals would behave in a crowd. When the opportunity offers they push themselves forward and pass into action ; they have their own way, for the natural tendency of any thought is to pass into action when it gets the chance. But if a stronger thought restrains it, then we term this an inhibition. Our minds are therefore always battle-grounds where impulses and inhibitions are for ever jostling, pulling, and pushing one another ; and, just as we should expect, the battle is to the strong.

Every action is the definite result of thinking, even when we do things, as we say, "without thinking." These automatic actions are accomplished as the result of thinking stored up in the form of habit or second nature. Where things may be said to "do themselves," as in the various

functions of the body over which we exercise no conscious control, they are done by virtue of the accumulated thought of the race which we inherit at birth.

An action is proof positive of a corresponding dominant thought ; because, if that particular type of thought had not been uppermost at the time, that action could not have taken place. The only guarantee that a particular action will not take place is that the corresponding thought should not have entered mind. Thoughts are the seeds of action, but you cannot produce an action out of nothing, as the conjurer appears to produce rabbits out of his hat. Neither are figs grown from thistles. Therefore in the long run it must be conceded that the only way to control actions is to regulate the antecedent thought, and in effect **thought-control is action-control.**

Actions, by virtue of memory, record themselves in character, and **our most frequent actions produce our characteristics.** If I am ever acting thoughtlessly

I must necessarily have the thoughtless type of idea in mind. But it does not stop at that, for the thought reinforces itself with every action. If I allow myself to be nervous on one occasion, then I am more likely to be so on the next. But if I stand up to my difficulties one day, then I am more likely to be able to tackle them again when they arise. This is really only to say that "nothing succeeds like success," while certainly nothing lets us down so completely and utterly as reiterated failure. So here is every action passing inevitably into character and making us what we are. But behind the action is the thought, and this we are able to control.

Character, however, is built not only out of actions but also out of reactions. Events do not record themselves in the mind as events, but according to our reactions to them. Something happens; I may get angry, or I may see the humorous side of it and laugh. It is not the actual event that is recorded, but rather the anger or the laughter; and the one makes me a less-

controlled person than I was before, while the other develops my sense of humour. Now, we cannot possibly hope to determine the manifold events that life serves up to us, but we can regulate our reactions to them ; so that in effect, as Hugh Walpole puts it in one of his novels, " it is not life that matters, it is the courage you bring to it." And the courageous attitude is built up by the slow accumulation of strong and vigorous thoughts. On the same line of working it is clearly possible to build up dominant ideas of any desired type, so that our reactions to events are of the helpful and constructive type.

Modifications of the character, which has thus been built by thought, are obviously possible by the aid of the same power directed into new channels. I am not compelled to remain as I am : that indeed would be a gospel of despair. **We are all of us growing, pulsing, vibrating, ever-changing beings, and there is nothing fixed or final about any human individual. We are ever in the making, and always the con-**

trolling element is our own thought, for, as Shakespeare says, "There's nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

Character (which we have agreed we can thus modify by thought) assesses us in life ; it places us, and very largely determines our happiness or the reverse. It makes a man respected, feared, or hated, as the case may be. It makes him—as the testimonials say—"honest, sober, and industrious," or something less worthy. It settles his friends, his reading and relaxations, and his exercise. It affects his credit with his banker and his status in society ; it places him in the company of rogues and vagabonds, or ranks him with the learned. It has everything to do with his prospects and his future, and is inseparably bound up with the position he must occupy in the world. **And the prime fact is that a man can alter his character.** When this is accomplished, even in small degree, corresponding modifications must necessarily appear in the environment in which he moves.

Only too many, however, spend their time and energy in grumbling at the world ; they do not see that it inevitably reflects themselves, and that its supposed shortcomings are really their own. People with defects in character cannot hope to be without the natural consequences of those defects : if a man *will* babble with his tongue, difficulties *will* follow until such time as he learns to hold it more in restraint. But the difficulty is really kindly and is intended to point out the defect and to act as a warning. When the defect is remedied the difficulties also vanish, because the cause is removed. All growth and progress in external things must begin from within, and it is entirely useless to try to remove outer difficulties and deficiencies without remedying the fault in character which brings them about. **We should therefore study our troubles ;** and by building the character along better lines we can rely upon Law automatically to bring us the exact consonance in external things.

CHAPTER IV

THE RAW MATERIAL FOR THOUGHT

WE are born with the capacity to think, but without any specific material with which to do so, though we have instincts and emotions at birth. As soon as we are born, our senses put us in connection with the outside world and we begin to gain experiences and our mental growth commences. Sense-messages begin to pour into the mind which, like the body, is nourished from the food it receives. If we ate no food the body would quickly wilt and eventually die, and so with the mind ; we must have mental sustenance in order to develop the intellect.

The senses put us in contact with the world around, but there is a vast difference in their scope and accuracy in individuals, ranging from the downright bad to the

exceptionally good. Consequently there is a corresponding variation in the quantity and quality of the food they supply. **These sense-messages must be as clear, accurate, and definite as possible, because upon their foundation we ground the processes of thought.** If the messages are inaccurate, that is to say if the individual hears or sees incorrectly (as thousands of people habitually do), all that is built upon that unsatisfactory foundation is bound itself to be unreliable.

EXERCISE I

Take a picture postcard and study it carefully, then put it away and write down all the points you can remember. Then check what you have enumerated by comparing it with the postcard, and you will probably gain some idea as to the inadequacy of your powers of observation. Study the card afresh and then repeat the experiment, and you will notice a marked improvement in your performance, due in the main to greater concentration.

Further exercises: Study and observe pictures, shop windows, or advertising matter. Observe your customers, note their moods and expressions, their talk, walk, and mannerisms. Let the book of human nature teach you. Continue like experiments until you gain a high degree of visual accuracy. Then make a habit of keeping the eyes open as you go about every day until this becomes second nature, and you automatically observe wherever you happen to be. "The man," says Bulwer Lytton, "who observes clearly and accurately grows unconsciously into a genius." I am far from promising that my readers will each of them become a genius, but I do say that they will easily be able to increase their efficiency.

EXERCISE II

Listen to a broadcast talk on the wireless, and then make a summary of what has been said. If two friends can do this at the same time they will profit much by comparing their versions, checking the one against the other.

Frequently at lectures an individual will get up and propound a question, beginning, "The lecturer said . . ." when the lecturer did not say anything of the kind. The questioner got hold of some idea from the lecture and then embroidered it according to his preconceived notions or emotions ; but the result is a silly question based upon incorrect hearing. **Some people are completely unreliable because of the faulty data supplied to them by the senses ; they tell lies, they distort truth, they make astonishing statements, they report all wrong, they remember all wrong.** Now, nothing on earth can make these incompetent folk think properly except they begin by training their senses to greater accuracy.

EXERCISE III

As you read this little book paragraph by paragraph put it down at the end of each, and ask yourself what was the gist of the paragraph. As I write, there is a definite idea about which

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each of these paragraphs is woven ; and if I put it in, you ought to be able to get it out. If you practise this, you can all the time be testing your impression by expression.

Further Exercises : Say your summary out aloud as if to someone else or to an audience ; practise also putting it into writing as a most valuable means of clarifying expression. Do not be too easy in criticism of your efforts, but continually insist upon improving the standard of your work. It does not matter whether what you have written goes into the waste-paper basket, the writing is recorded in mind and certainly influences your ability to think.

Sensations are fleeting things, but they register themselves in mind by virtue of memory so that we can recall them. Furthermore, we group them together according to the object which gave rise to them ; so that our conception of, say, a pair of skates is a sort of combined picture of all the sensations which skates have given us. This we call our "concept" of skates ; and thus our

mind is filled with concepts of one kind and another of which we have had experience. In fact we might term our stock of concepts a dictionary of our experiences. If we have many entries in the dictionary we have plenty of raw material for thinking, but if the material is scanty then the intellectual structure will be correspondingly flimsy and unsubstantial.

It is by this stock of concepts, this dictionary, that we think and understand, and from it we derive all our ideas. It forms the basis for all constructive and interpretative work, and it provides us with our material for imagination. Outside this stock of concepts we are unable to understand or to comprehend, and that is why when perhaps we have acquired a good working knowledge of written French we hear a native speaking the language, and are unable to understand a single word. We may have a good stock of French visual concepts, but no auditory; therefore although we hear every sound we understand nothing.

for there is nothing for us to recognise. All the messages of sense are but nerve impulses sent to the brain by the various avenues ; they are not sights or sounds, just as no spoken words come over the telephone, or written words over the telegraph. In all these cases there are but electrical impulses which have to be decoded and interpreted at the receiving end. And so it is in mind, these sense-impressions must be translated in the light of our previous experience before we can understand them.

Now the curious fact arises that we each of us compile our dictionaries from our own experiences, which themselves are individual and unique ; and therefore our interpretations are peculiarly our own and unlike those of anyone else. So nobody can see eye to eye with you or me, and we must expect these divergencies. We cannot in reason expect a man with Conservative concepts to view things in the same light as another with Socialist tendencies ; or a Roman Catholic to consider a point from the same

angle as, say, a Christian Scientist. A farm labourer and mathematician each look at an equation, a formula, or a row of figures. The labourer sees a row of figures, but the mathematician grasps a mathematical or geometrical truth, because he has the larger stock of concepts gained by his educational experience. We are therefore bound to see and understand things very differently, and there will always be differences of opinion, and this is Nature's way of keeping things from stagnating.

The combining of concepts forms ideas. When we take the concepts "cats" and "mice" and join them by a verb, we have made an idea—"cats eat mice." Take pictorial concepts and couple them, and there is the pictorial idea. Join rhythmic and melodic concepts, and in their combination lies a musical idea. Select concepts and join them in defiance of normal experience and we get a nonsensical idea. Join them with an "if" and there is a hypothetical idea—"If all the world were bread and

cheese, and all the seas were ink . . .” Couple concepts that have not as yet been joined, and you hit upon an original idea such as “cook by wireless” or “think by machinery.” Join the concepts in the conventional orthodox fashion and the result is the conventional stereotyped mind to which nobody will pay attention. Get out of the rut, and the very variety and originality of the ideas will compel attention.

Ideas are of every possible range and gradation from the entirely useless to the eminently practical and important, and when we assess and compare them we develop our power of judgment. But this must manifestly depend for its value upon the range and number of the ideas of which we have had experience. With a small experience my judgment may be emphatic but totally unsound, and when I have seen and heard more I shall probably modify that judgment very considerably. Therefore if we read, debate, discuss, study, travel, and listen, we shall be able to com-

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pare and contrast such a wide range of ideas that our judgment will become correspondingly the more stable and sure.

But since judgments and ideas are themselves founded upon concepts, and these again upon the information supplied by the senses, it is clear beyond question that we must start with the training of the senses.

EXERCISE IV

Practise analysing an object such as a coin, a flower, or a telephone ; then describe it fully.

EXERCISE V

Take a paragraph from a newspaper, read it through carefully, and then give a précis of its subject-matter, first in writing, then in speech.

Collecting objects demands close observation and classification, these are valuable. But the mere intention and concentration involved in carrying through the tasks of every day in the best possible fashion will help to develop these powers of observation which are of such prime

importance. Further remarks dealing with this same topic will be found in Chapters IV, X, and XI of the present author's book "How to Train the Memory," published in the same series as this.

But the essentials are clear. We must in every possible way demand and insist upon a higher standard of observation as a method of acquiring good and reliable raw material for thought.

CHAPTER V

FASHIONING THE THOUGHT

CONCEPTS are the raw material of thought, but this material must be wrought and fashioned in various ways in the workshop of the mind. There would be little profit if ideas entered the mind and remained there the same as when they came, as if we were to allow the raw material to continue raw instead of fulfilling its promise of becoming something more valuable. To take another simile, our thoughts are like seeds planted in the garden of the mind. When seeds are planted we hope that they will grow into flowers or vegetables, and we certainly should not take the trouble to sow them if they were merely to remain seeds without growth. So people who merely repeat impressions or ideas without having absorbed or digested them are said to have

"much memory and little wit." The knowledge and the patient accumulation of facts are essential, but true wisdom begins with what we get out of them.

These seeds are planted in the soil of the mind, sometimes fertile and sometimes quite the reverse. When an idea enters a fertile and active mind it immediately suggests a number of other related ideas, companion thoughts as it were ; for the organised mind is a mass of associated concepts and ideas. When such a mind is struck by an idea, it sparkles ; but when the same thought enters a dull mind, nothing happens. It is like a stone dropping dully into thick mud. These associations or links may be of all kinds ; "black," for example, may suggest its opposite "white," or "spoke " may bring up "wheel " as the part is related to the whole. Similarity of occupation may make the word "soldier " bring up "sailor," and so on. A genius has a wide range of associations, but so has many a lunatic ; the difference is that with the genius the associations

are rational and regulated, and with the lunatic they are not.

These associations will naturally vary much with the contents of the individual mind. For instance, the word "spot" may bring up to one the idea of a blemish, or billiards, or "spotting the winner"; to another it may stand for a locality, or to one of convivial tendencies it may only suggest whisky.

EXERCISE VI

Take a word more or less at random, write it down, and then immediately put in column form as many different associations as can be brought to mind, keeping each word directly associated with the original word. As an assistance to "thinking on one's legs" it is a valuable practice to make a large number of these associations mentally and as quickly as possible.

EXERCISE VII

Stand up and, aloud as to an audience, say a few well-chosen words upon six different

aspects of "soap," "fortitude," "circle," "baby," etc.; in a very little while this practice will result in a ready flow of ideas.

Since your facts are your raw material it is essential that they should be of first-class quality. Verify your facts wherever possible, instead of accepting them at second or third hand or on hearsay. Much that is incorrect appears in print, and though many will accept anything they find in a book or a newspaper, something more in the way of criticism is necessary. Keep a standard dictionary at hand, and if possible an encyclopaedia, and use them in the verification of facts, the comparison of statements, and the clarification of ideas. If young people can be trained to get the encyclopaedia habit it will prove invaluable.

Criticism, in the sense of judging and without any hostile bias, must precede the incorporation of material in mind. Certain statements or assertions we may reject offhand as unreasonable or wrong; and we

may defer for further consideration others which seem to us doubtful or improbable. Other points may commend themselves to us because they fit in with what we already know, or perhaps explain something which was not otherwise clear. There is also a peculiar and instinctive perception of truth which we experience when someone puts in definite form something which in hazy fashion had been circulating in mind. But keep the open mind, and yet guard it with a balanced judgment, so that the material absorbed into mind will have undergone a preliminary process of sifting.

We should be quite clear as to what a statement really means, by no means such a simple thing as it seems. Sometimes it is well to take the statement and to submit it to a process of analysis, finding the intrinsic meaning of each word and its significance due to its position in the sentence. Misconceptions are so easy. Take the words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." This statement does not mean that the poor-

spirited are blessed, but a very different thing, that "Blessed, in spirit, are the poor." Again, here in a resolution taken from the newspaper, its full implications demand careful thought : "It is Resolved that urgent measures for the promotion of inter-Imperial trade are needed to secure and extend the markets for British producers both at home and through the export trade." Why "urgent" ? What kind of "measures" ? Who is to decide them ? What is the precise meaning of "inter-Imperial" ? Does it imply "anti-Foreign" ? Why "secure and extend" ? What are "markets" ? What is the connection between home markets and inter-Imperial trade ? Why bother about exports ? And so on to any length. **It is impossible to take in the whole content of any extended statement at once, and the habit of analysis is most valuable.** Note the way in which a lawyer will spend much time and thought over the exact meaning and implication of a sentence.

Somewhat akin to this is a process of

expansion in mind, like that of cell-growth by subdivision. Suppose for example we take the one word MARKET which we have already had, and begin by dividing into "buying" and "selling." We can divide BUYING into "necessities" and "luxuries"; and SELLING into "goods" and "services." Each of these can then again be subdivided; NECESSITIES into "food" and "clothing"; LUXURIES into "mental" and "physical"; GOODS into "imports" and "exports"; and SERVICES into "freight" and "insurance." Thus from our original word MARKET we have now eight words, and the process may go on indefinitely. So we bring into mind a large range of ideas which did not at first appear, and it can be done from almost any starting point.

EXERCISE VIII

Expand in this manner (a) ART, (b) EFFICIENCY, (c) MIND, (d) SUCCESS, carrying the process of subdivision as far as

you can. Then subdivide in another fashion and note the different ideas suggested.

Another method of promoting thought is by asking oneself questions. We are too apt to take things for granted without thinking about them, and then this develops into the static habit of mind, whereas our object is to arouse a dynamic quality. Take coal, by way of illustration, and begin to ask a few questions about it. What is it? How was it made? Who discovered it? When? Where? How? Where was it mined? What did the miner get? What did I pay? Why should I pay so much? What are its uses? Why do we burn it? Need we burn it? Is there a better way? There is no end to the questions, nor to the amount of information which we get in response. Compare this with the attitude of mind which just thinks "coal" and leaves it at that.

EXERCISE IX

Take various concepts, abstract and concrete, as starting points. Work out as many

questions as you can regarding (a) MONEY, (b) SPORT, (c) AMBITION, (d) INTELLIGENCE.

Next begin to set the mind actively to work upon the things observed during the daily round, asking what they indicate, and drawing inferences. For instance, what might you infer if you saw an old gentleman in the street without a hat? There are several things: he might be a no-hat faddist, he might have lost his hat, he might be absent-minded and unaware that he had forgotten it, he might be doing it for a wager—there are fifty alternatives.

EXERCISE X

If you saw a motorist stop a policeman, again what might be the inferences? And which of those inferences would be strengthened if the policeman proceeded to take out his pocket-book? What could you infer if you saw a shop with the shutters up in the day-time? Or a workman buying a news-sheet at

eleven o'clock in the morning? Or a man with a celluloid collar?

In the subconscious mind we have a vast storehouse of information, a gold-mine, where everything that we have ever heard, seen, read, or experienced has registered itself in our unforgetting memory ; but these things will not come up save in haphazard fashion unless we seek them. The conscious mind grows so accustomed to dealing with its one thing at a time that it overlooks the vast capacity of the subconscious. It is not feasible to hold a number of items in the conscious mind at one time, and so these exercises given should be done with pencil and paper. Then as the mind passes from one thing to another, the record remains written, and the various topics and points lie open in review. But practice on paper undoubtedly facilitates mental work. It is, however, of little use merely to read about these exercises, **Do THEM.** Nothing can convince a person of

the existence of this storehouse of knowledge unless he demonstrates it to himself, and the reader should verify this fact by his own experiment. If he fails to try he is striking at the root of his own progress.

The whole object of such activities as these is to combat the prevalent "deadness" of mind and to render the mental processes vital and alert. There can be nothing passive about learning or progress, and inertia is the hallmark of the moribund. The mentality should be like quicksilver, but always subject to rational and orderly control; and anything that can contribute to this is a distinct aid to advancement and right thinking.

CHAPTER VI

THE EXPANDING OF THOUGHT

NATURE seems to establish a principle that works and then uses it on different levels. Where we find such a principle or law at work it is useful and sometimes most illuminating, to see if we can find a parallel in other directions; very frequently we shall find that we can. By way of illustration—we observe the various processes of the body; the taking-in of food, the digestion, the turning into rich, red blood, the question of natural taste, likes and dislikes, and other points. All these, we shall find, apply equally and suggestively to the mind, which must take in, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest; which has its natural likes and dislikes, and which instinctively rejects what is unsuitable. Then on a higher plane still, that of spirit, there will

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again be found a very close alignment of processes. Thus by the study of the requirements of the body we are led to an appreciation of the natural workings of mind and spirit, as well as other things.

EXERCISE XI

Write down in column form all the natural processes of the body, and then work out the correspondences, as far as applicable, with (a) MIND, (b) SPIRIT, (c) THE FAMILY, (d) BUSINESS.

When we talk of spirit we can find suggestive thoughts arising from a study of the conditions of wireless. There we note the same need for sensitiveness in the receiver, and for attunement in order to perceive at all ; there is round about us all wisdom and all knowledge, just as there are the other waves from all the broadcasting stations, and our ability to receive spiritual inspiration is strangely similar to the conditions applying to wireless reception. " Spiritual

things must be spiritually discerned," says the Bible ; " For distant reception a highly sensitive receiver is essential," says the wireless enthusiast. There is really not very much difference in principle between the two statements, they merely use a different terminology about similar activity on different planes.

Study Sound, and learn that practically every sound consists of a fundamental tone and a number of super-imposed overtones which give it the particular quality. This is just what makes the sound of a penny whistle and violin playing the same note so different. Then turn to human nature and see that each individual possesses a fundamental type of character and has super-imposed upon it a number of variations, kinks, whims, traits, and mannerisms which make him just what he is, giving the flavour to his life. People may be in harmony on their fundamentals and at odds on their overtones ; or they may agree on some or other of their overtones (as in a liking for

music, or a fondness for golf), while disagreeing on fundamentals. There are parallels also on the points of synchronisation, attunement, and sympathy, as well as in other directions.

On the question of organisation for business and other purposes we need not be above learning lessons from the highly developed communities of insect life, the ants and the bees ; and in industry and engineering from the beavers. The structure of the human body affords much material for the consideration of the structural engineer, just as the work of the common spider has been an inspiration to the manufacturer of artificial silk. The marvellous valves of the true and false vocal cords in the human throat have not, so far as I am aware, received due attention from the inventor as embodying specific principles, but they are wonderfully ingenious and efficient. Then life itself may be compared to a voyage wherein is the need for captain and crew, compass and chart, port and cargo, motive power, trimming and

seaworthiness. All of these have their parallels in our human voyagings, for we meet with gales and tempests as well as fair weather and calm seas, and sometimes we must encounter wreck and disaster. Or again life is a school and Dame Nature is our taskmistress, and visits punishment upon us for the lessons that we have mislearnt or not learnt at all. There are countless parallels, and as we take time to study and work these out the mind opens out and becomes more illumined, and the exercise spells growth.

EXERCISE XII

Work out fully the parallels between, for example,

- (a) *School and Commerce.*
- (b) *Speech and Song.*
- (c) *Painting and Music.*
- (d) *Study and Growth.*
- (e) *Wireless and Advertising.*

There are two principles of mental working which should be known and

used, namely, Induction and Deduction. Induction means that we keep our eyes and ears open to study things and events, and after we have obtained sufficient data we begin to classify and study them and to elucidate their laws and principles. This leads to new knowledge and is a method of discovery, and it helps a person to become self-educating and less dependent upon outside teaching. The Deductive method means that, having been given the laws or principles, we work out their various applications ; it is a method of verification rather than research, and does not so much conduce to original or individual thought. It is rather like working to orders instead of on our own responsibility. As a matter of fact we use both in combination, first gathering data, classifying and working up to principles, and then again testing the principles by their application.

Another way of getting the mind to move is by putting to it hypothetical ideas. "Supposing I had £1,000 left to me as a

legacy, what should I do with it ? ” This a once starts a train of speculation which brings many new ideas into mind, and sometimes the reactions are very suggestive. As applied to practical problems, the inventor will often find that a new vista will open up to him by the putting of a hypothetical case, and the wide-awake man can always ask himself, “ If I wish to increase my own efficiency, how can I set about it ? ” He has then a definite problem in front of him, and there are plenty of people who can do much towards solving such a problem, while perhaps they might never think of formulating it. “ Supposing . . . ” or “ If . . . ” may very well put them on the track, and this may be termed speculative thinking.

EXERCISE XIII

Work out some of the ideas suggested by the hypothetical ideas :

- (a) *If I were out of work.*
- (b) *If I were put in charge of my department.*

(c) *If I were asked to go to Australia to-morrow.*

(d) *If I were Prime Minister.*

(e) *If nobody spoke the truth.*

A well-organised mind with a comparatively small stock of ideas is able to produce a better result than one with more ideas and less organisation. So also a shop with a small but well-arranged stock is more efficient than one with a big stock in an untidy muddle. A vital point in mind is the linkage between its various elements; the mind should be somewhat like a network, with the knots for the facts and the threads for associations. But before these associations can exist they must be made, and the process is a mind-developer. Suppose that we wish to link up Music (or Motoring, Mathematics, Mechanics, or anything else) with other things, then disregarding the more obvious linkages we think of the subject in connection with War. At

once there spring to mind military bands, drums and fifes, pageant and ceremony, popular songs, Kneller Hall, bugle calls, Dettingen *Te Deum*, Salvation Army, savage Tom-toms, war dances, etc. So far this does not differ much from simple association, but if each of these connections be pondered and expanded it suggests a rapid flow of new ideas.

Link up Music and Meals, and at once the thought of restaurant orchestras comes up, with jazz, dancing, cabarets, drinks, dresses, decorations, performers, instrumentalists, late hours, strings, wind, saxophones, singers, banquets, and so forth, with hardly any limit. Now for making links one will naturally at first take only such subjects as are of use, but as soon as one has given definite time to this, when a topic crops up in conversation there is a ready flow of connected ideas accompanying it. If one writes, there is a volume of matter available. If one simply thinks, then memory is at work storing up the results.

EXERCISE XIV

Work out as many linkages as you can between :

- (a) *Education and Salesmanship.*
- (b) *Art and Industry.*
- (c) *Health and Efficiency.*
- (d) *Imagination and Progress.*

Then follow up some of the more promising ideas, working them out by expansion, questions, parallels, and associations. Finally cast some of these thoughts into writing.

Our minds think pictorially rather than in words, and visualisation is a valuable method of practical thinking. We should be able to form mental pictures of what we desire, and to hold these pictures steady in mind. It is a very important form of training, and not so easy as it sounds ; but there is no royal road to its acquisition save by practice in observation and mental recall. We should be able to observe, "isolating" certain features at will and then "re-combining" them in the desired direc-

tion. Here is a wall-paper in the shop, and at home is the dining-room: can we now open the inner vision and visualise the effect of the paper duly hung there? Or here is a pattern of dress material; can we see what it will be like when made up? Here is a machine which it is desired to improve; what will be the effect of introducing this or that feature? Can we visualise it? Here is a small business; can we see it twice the size? There goes a man with authority written all over him; can I visualise myself as possessing something of the same carriage? If I can, then I have a pattern upon which to work, and every chance of growth along those lines if I do but hold the picture steady and work for it.

EXERCISE XV

Make a list of the qualifications (say six, at first) you wish to develop in mind. Then work at visualising and thinking them into your character for one week each. At the end of six

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weeks go through them again. Then note the improvement at the end of three months.

Write down definitely what you intend to accomplish by the end of the next twelve months. Hold the picture steady, work for it, and then test your progress by the picture at the end of the period.

Neither vision nor work, separately, is adequate. Vision just allowed to remain in the clouds is an avenue to insanity, and mere work without definite plan and purpose is idiocy. **Vision backed up by work moves the world, and vision is only a mode of thinking ; and work and action are the natural outcome of the idea.** But the wide-awake reader will now be aware that thinking is a very active process, a knocking before things open to us, an asking before we are granted our boon, and a seeking before we find. There is nothing lackadaisical or dreamy about it ; nobody can do it for us, and nobody should. It makes vital men and women who must

always count in the world. It demands work, but in return it pays vast dividends. And even people who have no definite work to do at the moment can get busy in improving their minds, their morals, and their prospects, at no cost whatever except the exercising of their power to think, instead of looking to Labour Exchanges, Government grants, or any external aid whatever.

CHAPTER VII

THE REFINEMENT OF THOUGHT

CONCENTRATION is one of the keys to effective thinking, and is a subject frequently misunderstood. It is in essence the simple attunement of the thought to its object, and it should not involve screwing up of the eyebrows, pursing of the lips, or mental contortions. You have heard of a piano-tuner raising the pitch of a note until it sounds exactly in unison with the desired tone ; this accomplished, he leaves it. So in the same way concentration means that we tune the mind to the desired activity, and then we leave it ; we do not need to keep on screwing or compelling it. Indeed a better description of concentration would be mental poise.

To be attuned to one subject implies that we are automatically thrown out of tune

with other subjects. In the one aspect there is a unity with the object of the thought ("the thinker and the thought are one"), and in the other there is exclusion of all else. Under these circumstances all our mental power is being focused and directed at one point, instead of being allowed to run wide and ineffective over a broad field of attention. In the first instance this must generally be accomplished by an effort of the Will, but as the mind "warms" to its work the type of attention changes, being determined then by Interest rather than Will. The subject holds us by its own attraction, and effort has vanished.

This attuning of the mind corresponds very closely to the tuning of the wireless set to the various wave-lengths, and it is only the sensitiveness of the receiving instrument which makes the otherwise inaudible message capable of being heard. A valve set will pick up a much greater range of vibration than will a crystal, and in the absence of a sufficiently sensitive receiver nothing can be

picked up at all. But the etheric waves are there nevertheless.

The range of the human eye for vision is strictly limited, and those limits we know with comparative accuracy ; but when we add the services of the lens then its range both for the infinitely great and for the inconceivably small is vastly increased. Add the sensitiveness of scientific skill and the super-accuracy of the mathematical mind, and things are rendered comprehensible far beyond the range of the microscope or telescope of highest power. Vision is raised to higher octaves altogether. Even then there are vistas beyond vistas, realms beyond realms, and knowledge beyond knowledge ; it is presumptuous in the extreme to suppose that we can ever come to the limits of ascertainable fact or reach to the confines of wisdom. Therefore, practically speaking, all knowledge and all wisdom are already there in existence, and we are simply in the position of human wireless sets endeavouring to pick up the eternal broadcast and to

extend the boundaries of human knowledge.

Our problem then is to increase our own sensitiveness so that we may be ever acquiring finer and better data for our thinking. This increasing sensitiveness, be it noted, is the prime object of education. It is a popular error to suppose that mere book-learning or the stuffing of the head with facts constitutes true education ; in so far as a supposed education leads to self-sufficiency, the know-all attitude, or the closed mind, it is a process of ossification rather than development. It then amounts to training people to die young in the intellectual sense. I would therefore combat the somewhat prevalent idea that a man is inevitably handicapped by reason of the fact that he has had a poor education in the conventional meaning ; indeed one might show that over and over again men thrown on their own resources have developed a finer wit and a shrewder talent than the man smothered in educational opportunities. No one will be so foolish as to decry those

opportunities, but the final issue is always determined by the use that is made of them. **Learn to think, and to develop your own power, individuality, and sensitiveness, daily and weekly, and as the years pass by you will need to spend no time in regretting early lack of opportunity.**

Supersensitiveness (always to be accompanied by a corresponding degree of self-control) will by its attunement bring in this finer range of data. You will have a superior selection of facts to act as the raw material for your thinking. This material itself must be manipulated, manufactured, turned, recombined and refashioned; but at any rate you are in the position of the man who has the finest ingredients and raw products at his disposal. Naturally he will be able to turn out the finest article; his house will be builded of the best bricks, the texture of his intellect will be of the finest weave. Thus by the development of the range and accuracy of the normal senses it will be found that something else is being added, but this can

never be out of its due order, and only to him that hath will be given that extra resource which is the reward of his present use and development of his normal powers.

This "something else," we may suggest, is the growth of the intuitive sense, the perception of principles ; some might term it merely the faculty of "guessing right." At any rate, whatever you term it the fact remains that this higher range of perception does undoubtedly exist, and I am suggesting here that it is a normal consequence of the correct use of the powers of thinking in the ordinary way. **By the attunement of the thoughts to a particular subject and their "poising" on that topic there is a definite unison produced between the thinker and the object of the thought, and knowledge enters the mind by other than the usual channels.** You may believe or disbelieve this according to your own predisposition, but the only reasonable attitude is to decide to submit the matter to the test of your own experience ; for I

have already suggested that it is for the individual to test and verify his facts, whenever possible, for himself.

I would go further than this and give it as my opinion that not only is intuition capable of being developed by the individual who will take the necessary trouble, but that by the same process of concentration, attunement, and poise, it is possible by slow degrees to gain the faculty of inspiration. This is to assert that it is possible not only to get in touch with facts, but with forces; and when we can accomplish this we begin to gain a dynamic and compelling vigour to our thinking which will enable it to stand in a class by itself.

It is true that there has been only one Shakespeare, but he would be a brave man who could assert that, given the same conditions, there could never be another. As a matter of fact all that we can say is that there never *has* been another, and therefore the identical conditions have, presumably, never been duplicated. But I

am compelled to believe that some small approach to like conditions can be made by those who are willing to take the necessary trouble ; and I am venturing to suggest the first steps. You will not be a second Shakespeare, doubtless, but you will at any rate accomplish more than if you are content, as William James said in reference to habit, to "solidify at too low a level."

It is not within the scope of this little book fully to elucidate the conditions that are essential to this increasing sensitiveness of response to the universe around us, but we may summarise them. The process begins with the refinement, the discipline, and the super-cleanliness of the body. **We have to work through the physical body as the instrument of the finer self, and it must be kept fit, lithe, elastic, clean, active, and alert.** Many fail at this first obstacle ; they will not take the necessary care to keep their body attuned, and this fact alone shows that they are not worthy of the greater gift, and they will not receive it.

But if by attention to diet, exercise, the refinement of the thoughts, self-discipline and self-denial you are prepared to take the first step, you will find that there is a corresponding development of the mental forces.

The next step is to take the groundwork of normal psychology covering the ordinary working of mind, and to develop this as far as feasible. This present book will give a number of hints in this direction, and so also will the companion volume *How to Train the Memory*, and there are other and larger books by the present author and many other writers. But it cannot be too strongly insisted that **Mind, as well as body, must be schooled, disciplined, and refined.** We are too apt to be easy with ourselves, to allow our emotions to run loose, to let our wits go wool-gathering, to tolerate a faulty memory, to allow our imagination to go to sleep, and our will to develop into a wobble. These are signs of mental insubordination, and am I to allow these to grow unchecked,

and acquiesce in my own delegation to fifth- or sixth-rate rank ?

Then, finally, by no means make the mistake of separating the higher from the lower, for there are other planes of endeavour which we must consider if we are to have harmony in the whole. Your spiritual outlook upon life, do you think it makes no difference in practice ? Let me tell you it assuredly does. Any selfishness must introduce an element of incongruity in the tuning which will prevent the finest messages from coming through, and this must depreciate the value of the raw material, and therefore also of the finished product of thought. Any shortcoming on the higher levels automatically colours the outlook, tingeing the data with inaccuracy, and therefore also the conclusions. It would not be easy to improve upon the sound counsel for thought given in the Bible : “ . . . whatsoever things are true, lovely, and of good report : think on these.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE DIRECTION OF THOUGHT

THINKING is a force, and the results it produces are influenced by its direction, its one-pointedness, and its intensity. The final issues are also contingent upon its continuity, for thought that swings from side to side like a weathercock, unstable and nowhere for long together, is little likely to bring about much of value. This is where the concentration and poise prove of such importance, for they enable us to hold steadily and unswervingly a picture of the end to be attained.

When a definite picture is held as an objective or an ideal to be striven for, as when a man puts before him a clear vision which he wishes to bring about in his life's work, we observe that events begin to group themselves around his objective, and both

men and things seem to order themselves accordingly. Now this is not chance : there is just as much law and order about it as there is when the farmer sows the grain and the harvest follows in due season, or when Luther Burbank, cross-fertilising his fruits, produced new species. It is just as much cause and effect as when the trigger is pulled and the gun goes off. But we must clearly distinguish between the immediate cause, the power at work, and the ultimate result. The farmer sows the grain, but the life forces give the increase. He can say neither yea nor nay to these, for they exist independently of himself, though he can use them or not as he pleases. Luther Burbank could only play the part of a human bee and cross-fertilise the flowers, the life-forces accomplished the rest. We may pull the trigger, but it is the inpent power which produces the explosion. And so it is with thought. **We do the actual thinking, setting the process in action, but the life-forces do the work.** The results also bear a definite

relation to the thoughts that originated them.

Now, these thoughts which we entertain in mind, variable in every way as they are, are the seeds of action, and grow into their corresponding results. Evil actions are the result of evil thoughts, just as surely as good are the product of the reverse. Both our thoughts and our actions may therefore be classified as constructive or destructive, helpful or harmful, positive or negative; and always we have the power to choose. Therefore also we have the ability to start the life-forces in one or other direction, and these forces proceed to mould material things, people, and events according to the mental vision. I cannot too emphatically point out that we do not accomplish these things strictly by our own efforts, but by using the relay of power that lies inherent in the very nature of things, as indicated by the examples we have given. We need not therefore take any special credit to ourselves, for anyone can use these powers

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as soon as he realises that they are in existence.

Do not be in too great a hurry, however, to fix your objective ; do a considerable amount of thinking beforehand, and do not ground your ideas upon too limited a range of experience. Many people, for instance, think that they would achieve heart's desire if they had sufficient money ; but even millionaires find that money is merely money, and heart's desire is not on sale. Others set themselves to get business, and find in the long run that business has got them—a very different proposition. One man decides that by fair means or foul he is going to marry this particular girl, and he does. Then he spends the rest of his life wishing that he had been more circumspect about the choice of his objective. There is safety in choosing a more general ideal and aiming at those qualities which can never be a drug in any market ; we cannot have too many men who are reliable, four-square, open-minded, alert, and courageous. Men with capacities and

feelings into consideration. It would be folly for a person to picture a career for which he had no natural talent. But having built the mental picture, then go "all out" to accomplish it. Ability is released by the idea of "can," and pent up by "can't." **Remember that in degree the power is there, but it is your attitude to it which determines whether it gets a chance.**

Perseverance is formed out of the regulated thoughts, just as scrappy work comes from scrappy thinking. Law, order, and method in mind can be developed through orderly thinking, and we have shown how thought may be made to bear fruit. Reliability and consistency are yours when you choose to pay the price. Now, what shall we make of all these engaging possibilities? It is of little use to turn pessimist, imagining that the world is full up, that all the tasks have been done, that all the inventions have been made, and that nothing remains but to put up the national shutters. Unfortunately thought works equally effectively in an undesirable direction, and if the nation

adopts the down-and-out type of idea it cannot legitimately complain if the like result follows. But it is surely making but lamentable use of the vast powers of imagination, thought, and memory.

Whoever you may be reading these pages, in all probability I shall never meet you save through the medium of print, but I do pray you to wake up and realise the great possibilities that are yours. Picture big things and fine, and then set to work to make them come true. Study a short life of Napoleon, or read the biography of any great man, and then tell yourself that they only utilised the powers that you yourself possess. **The world is continually in the making, and you are one of its makers ; your life and career are largely in your own hands.** Whatever you accomplish inevitably affects the lives of others with whom you are, or are to be, linked ; and thence its influence carries on to the unborn. The responsibility is great, but the sense of privilege is also vastly inspiring.

CHAPTER IX

THE FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

ALL the vital and essential things of life are free, it is the unnecessary frills and luxuries that are so expensive. Fresh air, water, exercise, and thought--these cost us nothing and yet are priceless. Thought in particular is individual and unique, and nobody in the world is able to interfere with our intimate thinking. Thought, too, is infinitely flexible and can be turned in any direction ; while the capacity to entertain a new thought is a guarantee of the possibility of new growth, and therefore one is never too old to begin. Nor too young either. But as memory is always at work, its traces in the form of habits are ever with us ; consequently the young have less to re-form than the older. On the other hand the older folk are generally wiser and more experienced,

less fly-away, and more convinced of the importance of getting life right ; so that the advantages are not all on the side of youth.

If you should be ambitious, and yet feel that you have been denied some of the advantages that other people have had in the way of teaching and training, spend not one single moment in regrets. **You have the power of thought to make what you will of the future.** Later on you will come to know that only too many of those you may envy are content. *Content !* That means that they are satisfied with what has been given to them ; it is the passive rather than the active attitude, sitting still rather than moving on. But a later starter who keeps moving will always overtake a man with a big start who sits and waits. Education is a matter of to-day rather than yesterday, so ask yourself what kind of an education you are giving yourself *now*. Even if you should be in doubt about any question of study, speech, writing, diction, manner, or habit—all these have been made

by thought, and can if necessary be re-formed by the same means. There is no finality about the matter, and the power is there to use. Keep your critical faculty awake, and do not scruple in your own mind to compare yourself with other people ; if you admire some man's characteristics in preference to your own, then make a specific mental model of some one thing, and build it.

The present is only as a moving point traced upon the line from the unfathomable past to the illimitable future, and it has no fixed existence. At 9.25 A.M. 9.26 is future ; at 9.27 it is past. So life moves and we move with it, and we are not tied down, shackled, bound, or hemmed in save we ourselves, consenting, think so. If we but say, " I *will* get a move on," and follow up the idea by action, then we will have moved ; it is as simple as that. Yet ever so many people spend their days saying to themselves, " Oh, I *wish* I could move," and don't. Then they wonder why they remain stranded high and dry while

the river of life runs ahead, and their more active friends pass out of sight. Let us banish for ever the idea that education is past, realising that it is something which we are acquiring every day we live.

Perhaps you wish to make more of your business: excellent. How do you propose to set to work? Waiting for someone to die so that you may step into his shoes is a next-door-to-hopeless method of doing things: far better make a new pair of shoes which nobody has yet worn. This is constructive. Or do you propose to wait until you can get sufficient capital? **There is no capital in the world that pays such magnificent dividends as the thoughts you build into your brain and inscribe in your character; there is no finer investment.** Or do you suggest putting your money into something safe and waiting till the cheques come rolling in? Far better bank on your own resources, and realise that business is only a part of life, and not life a part of business. We are in this life for the

specific purpose of growth in spiritual stature and wisdom, in all that makes for true manhood ; and at all times we have to work out our own salvation. We grow by the effort that calls out our latent resources of strength and endurance, and demands intelligence. Then we should thank God for problems, difficulties, emergencies, spade work, and hard tasks ; for these make men.

Business itself is far more than going to the office from 10 till 5 o'clock, with an hour and a half for lunch, and intervals for morning coffee and afternoon tea. It is *service* to the customer, to the community, and to civilisation itself. If it fails in this it fails altogether, no matter what dividends it pays. Giving the service as it should be given involves the development of brains and of moral qualities which are in line with life's purposes. In my mind's eye I can picture our short-sighted friend who turns up his nose and says, " What on earth have moral qualities of service to do with business ? Business is buying cheap and selling dear,

and that is all there is to it." He dates himself half a century behind the times, he writes himself as blind, he brands himself as stupid, and we shall certainly pay scant attention to him. He specifically needs education for salesmanship because he obviously does not know the elements of business. There is no possible progress along lines such as his, for his thinking is all wrong, and life will show him so.

Read business books, study modern methods, think and experiment. Become an authority on some specific subject, and half an hour a day at thinking and reading in time will make you this. Put every ounce of brains and energy that you can into business, while keeping yourself fit and wholesome in other directions. Invest yourself in your work and the work will prosper and open out, but even more *so will you*. But do not disregard the time element: it is a mistake to be in too much of a hurry, for life is a long-distance event and not a sprint. It is the stayer and the sticker who

finally counts, and you must remember that solid matter and slow-moving minds need much effort for their reorganisation before the final result appears. And again remember that life is for the fighting rather than for the final victory, and were one to win too easily or too early life might lose much of its zest.

Perhaps you desire more happiness from life? Then your thought can do much to bring that to you also. But instead of looking to the intellect you must set to the schooling of the emotions, learning to think unselfishly. No one can ever find happiness direct, the indirect is the only method of approach. Set to work to make other people happy, forgetting yourself, and presently (on the authority of observation and the testimony of all wise men down the ages) you will discover that without the definite seeking you have yet found your own joy. **What you put into life, life in return is putting into you ; you grow by what you give out, by virtue of memory. This**

is the eternal paradox of life, that whoever would save his life shall lose it, and losing it shall save it.

Selfishness distorts the vision, clouding the impressions that come in and making our raw material and our finished product of thought equally beclouded and unsound. In degree selfishness is a form of mental unsoundness. It is also the begetter of ill-health and of wrong conditions generally, and these are Nature's methods of calling attention to the wrong alignment of the individual. If he grows wiser and learns the better way, the wrong conditions will vanish, for they have served their purpose. But if he is not wise, then the troubles will increase.

Finally, one may take the higher view; for we can turn the machinery of thought in any direction, and even our spiritual advancement must be accomplished through the agency of mind. We actually build ourselves of our thoughts, which have an inevitable reflex upon the body. We can definitely observe the coarsening of the

texture of the flesh through the low level of the thought, or a corresponding refining process. Every thought tells, and there is the closest co-partnership between body and mind, and on a higher octave there is a corresponding partnership between mind and spirit. The secret of true achievement is the harmonising of vibration on three planes—body, soul, and spirit. Then we get the action and interaction from the higher to the lower, and in the reverse direction, just as if a note were sounding with its fundamental and the two higher overtones, making a rich and satisfying sound.

Your subconscious mind is coloured by your past thinking, but into its reservoir pours a never-ending stream of thoughts which you yourself select. In time these begin to tinge and alter the original colour, and in a longer period they can change it altogether. If therefore we desire to make the highest of the self we must build it of the finest material ; if we desire to become spiritual we think of

those things of the spirit which can tune the mind to a noble note. The result is just as inevitable and exact as if we elected to build it along lines of mental efficiency, or as if we chose to develop the physical side by exercising the muscles as a prize-fighter might do. But once again we have the power of choice ; and if I can say any word that may carry weight I would suggest that the only wisdom is to seek the highest. Physical development as an end is sadly inadequate. Higher, yet still insufficient, is mere mental achievement. The crown is spiritual insight and development which sees to the heart of mental and physical problems, and envisages in them all the growth of human character on a spiritual pattern as the objective of life. And all this is to be accomplished—for there is no other way—through Thought.

CHAPTER X

THOUGHT AND HEALTH

THUS in general terms we have seen that thought is the builder and creator of most of the conditions which surround us. But there are three specific and essentially practical directions in which it will pay any reader a thousand times over to devote his attention. The first consideration is what the mind can do for the body, in establishing a notably higher degree of physical health.

Mind and body must be regarded as two sides to the one self, or as partners in the business of life. They are as intimately connected as the two sides of a wheel, and wherever one side goes the other follows. The body consists of a vast number of individual cells which are continually multiplying by dividing! The tissues are broken down by exertion of any kind, mental or physical, and are rebuilt from the food

we eat. An hour's exercise in the open will very likely call for the sacrifice of many thousands of these cells, and thus the body is ever in a state of continual flux and rapid change ; every single cell in the body, it is estimated, is changed in a period of some three years. But mind is also changing at least as rapidly, for as you read these paragraphs one by one, something fresh goes on record in mind, and its contents are altered by just exactly so much.

• We see, therefore, that both mind and body are never fixed, but that each is being perpetually remade anew even every minute of the day. Further, there is always a kind of reflex action going on between them, for everything that happens to the one has its certain effect upon the other. Every single thought results either in some raising or lowering of the body tone, while everyone knows that mind goes up or down according to the well-being, or otherwise, of the body. It is notoriously difficult to be either intelligent,

pleasant, or imaginative, with a bilious attack ; and even an aching tooth will do much to put people who are not naturally saints into quite a disagreeable frame of mind. Therefore our problem of health has to be considered from both angles, mental and physical.

In any partnership one of the partners, as a matter of fact if not always in theory, is first fiddle and calls the tune ; and the same thing holds good as to mind and body. **One of the partners must be in command, and obviously the mind ought by rights to run the body.** But in only too many cases people are in effect run by their body, by their livers or their indigestions, by their rheumatisms or their constipations ; generally with most unhappy, if not disastrous, results which extend to other people. This is a case of the crew running the captain, and experiencing a pretty poor voyage in consequence. The mind must take charge and be master in its own house, the body coming under its control.

While we recognise that this is the natural order, not many people know the precise manner in which mind affects the body, which is, that thought affects the circulation of the blood, upon which physical well-being so largely depends. The way in which some thoughts will very visibly bring a blush to the features shows the real way in which the distribution of the blood is altered. Concentration of thought upon any particular part of the body has the effect of sending an increased supply of blood to that area. Professor Elmer Gates, of Chicago, carried out some interesting experiments with a man lying at full length on a plank, which was delicately balanced in the middle upon a knife-edge. This individual was asked to imagine that he was running a race, and to concentrate his attention upon his legs. The result of this attention was an increased flow of blood to the legs, and the plank was observed to sway to leg-end down.

In another interesting experiment the

same individual was put to sleep on his balanced plank, and then someone was requested to tip-toe silently into the room without waking him. The subconscious mind, we know, never goes to sleep, but is always on guard. So the sleeper was indeed aware, though not consciously, of the newcomer's entry; and even this unconscious knowledge caused a cerebral activity calling for an increased supply of blood to the brain. So delicate was the balance that even in sleep the subject's weight altered slightly and the plank inclined head downwards. We therefore see that every thought makes *some* difference, and the cumulative effect of repeated thought in time becomes very strong.

All our thoughts, as we have learnt, go on permanent record in the subconscious mind, and the unfortunate thing is that most of these are not at all thoughts of health and well-being, but rather those of ill-health or disease. We take health for granted (until we lose it!) and forbear to think about it,

but unwelcome disease itself compels us to pay attention to it. Even our newspapers foster this unhappy type of thought and publish a list of distinguished invalids, and if the invalid is very distinguished there is frequently a great deal about his disease, all of which noxious matter the public takes in and stores in its subconscious mind. If the papers were to feature the splendidly well people who had never had a day's illness in their lives it might be more helpful to the public health.

We meet plenty of otherwise sensible folk who expect their usual winter cold or influenza to last six weeks, and their hay fever to attack them as soon as the ripening pollen gives the signal. And when the person at the next desk in the office starts a cold these people know it will go all round—and so it probably will. If they travel in the bus or train with some one redolent of eucalyptus, they profess to know what they are in for—and unfortunately they are generally right.

But in all these cases the point is that a tremendous bias of thought is being built up by repetition in favour of disease. Its cumulative effect is to act as a permanent depressant upon the circulation, so lowering the body-tone and its normal resistance to disease that it only too readily succumbs to any chance infection. Germs are part of our daily lives and we cannot hope to avoid them, but some people do as a fact go down to them while others are immune from their effects. The crux is the natural resisting power, and this is the factor so immensely affected by thought. If we fear infection, the very fear lowers our resistance and the germ gets its chance. But if we are strongly poised, our resistance is kept high and the infection gets very little or no chance ; any medical man will confirm this.

If we give ourselves a positive bias in this way by the use of continued suggestion we can help ourselves a very great deal. " I am so well and so strong that I cannot catch

anything" is a very useful thought to be built in over a long period, but any strong positive idea of this nature is bound to be of much benefit in increasing the natural resisting power. "I feel fit and fine," may be recommended as helpful, especially first thing in the morning as a sort of early tonic. Most people are rather proud of being unspeakable before 11 a.m.! We should at all costs eliminate those thoughts which can only do us harm, and we should specifically concentrate upon those which will be helpful and will result in giving us a bias in the right direction.

Another thing which Professor Gates discovered was that our thoughts also affect the circulation of the endocrine system of glands, which in turn controls the whole of the working of the body. If this be disturbed all sorts of physical and other difficulties are liable to arise. The Professor found that every negative emotion, such as hatred, anger, jealousy, and so on, produces a definite

poison in the bloodstream through the secretion of these glands. So a person who allows himself to suffer from a fit of violent temper definitely poisons himself, and becomes a sick man physically as well as mentally. A jealous person is also poisoned and completely unfitted to exercise wise judgment; while a man or woman who hates is sending out boomerang-like thoughts, which are bound to return upon them to their own hurt.

The poisons are definite, and can be identified from the exudations from the sweat glands of the sufferer and also from the breath coming from the lungs; they vary with the particular emotions experienced. The Professor estimated that a strong man in a violent temper would, in one hour, generate sufficient poison to poison eighty healthy people. Anyone who thus indulges his passions and his tempers is a thus poisoned person and cannot in reason hope to be normally well either in body or healthy in mind. **Nature's intention in all this**

is to compel our attention to the fact that we are behaving in a way definitely hampering to our evolution ; and, if we learn the lesson, in time the difficulties cease, having attained their object. But if we go on being foolish in our tempers we shall eventually slide down the hill of health, to arrive at the bottom having lost the health we had.

This is the way in which life itself puts a premium upon the right use of thought, and exacts a penalty from us for its wrong use. We are given the choice as to our thoughts, but there is one thing that is perfectly certain—so certain that we only waste our time if we go on any other plan—and that is, that trouble follows upon wrong thought “as the wheel follows upon the heel of the ox.” But it costs nothing save a little effort and determination to turn the thoughts into positive and health-bringing channels and to give ourselves a bias towards health which all the doctors in the world are powerless to ensure for us.

This is not quite the whole story of the natural resistance to disease, for we said that the question has to be dealt with also from the angle of the body. The prime point here is that internal cleanliness, and the complete avoidance of any degree of constipation, is essential in order that the body should be antiseptic and disease-resisting. Poisons allowed to remain in the body have the effect of lowering the normal resistance, thus predisposing to disease and infection. But if both mind and body are kept clean and wholesome—and it is the mind's business to see that they are—then an increasingly high standard of physical health should be attainable by any reader who will exert himself to reach it along these lines.

CHAPTER XI

THOUGHT AND WEALTH

MY definition of the successful man is a threefold one, that he should be healthy, happy, and useful. In the last chapter we dealt with the topic of health ; the subject of thought in relation to happiness occupies the following chapter, and in this present one we deal with the normal result of proving our usefulness to society, chiefly in the way of business or professional work.

First of all we should not confuse wealth with money, thinking of it exclusively in terms of cash. We cannot eat or drink money, and all the money in the world would be useless to us if Nature ceased to pay the world wages once a year in the shape of the harvest of food that she yields in return for the work put into husbandry. Money is mainly a very con-

venient way of reckoning values and a useful means of exchange. If anyone is inclined to regard gold as his wealth he might ask himself when last he saw its colour or possessed a half-sovereign.

Neither is business rightly to be considered merely as a matter of making money, or of buying cheap and selling dear. **Business is the very wonderful machinery that has grown up concurrently with civilisation and now enables it to exist, feeding, clothing, and housing itself.** It is a very intricate and wonderfully balanced piece of mechanism, and under normal conditions, when each part functions as it should, it works tolerably well, though nobody would suggest it is not capable of improvement. It puts the products of half the world on our breakfast table without any fuss, while the service of perhaps a thousand people goes to the provision of our lunch ; and as a rule we take all this for granted and think nothing of it.

Even the milk jug in the morning, if we

think about it, represents one long tale of service which begins with the cow on the farm. Who thinks of the cow in connection with the milk? Then there is the milkmaid who milks the cow, or in the very up-to-date establishment the mechanic who works the motor that milks her by machinery. The milk then has to be conveyed from the farm to the dairy, there to be tested, cooled, pasteurised, and finally bottled. Thence it has to be laden on the lorries or trolleys and taken out by the roundsman and delivered to your door. There the domestic service takes charge of it, and eventually the milk appears in the morning cup of tea or coffee. How many people have been involved in this round of service over the simple milk jug at breakfast? Nobody can say.

Very little consideration along these lines will convince any one that "business" is only the name for this far-reaching machinery of service which enables the world to go round. And the world only revolves comfortably so long as each person does his own

little part of the job faithfully and well. Directly anyone neglects his task or refuses his meed of service the whole machine begins to get out of gear, things go wrong, inconvenience quickly develops into downright difficulty; and sheer starvation would confront half the nations of the world if it were to stop altogether. England, as an island, compelled to import the bulk of her foodstuffs, would be worse off than most other countries.

But we note in the working of this machine that we all expect to pay reasonably in return for the valuable service it renders us, first in providing for our means of existence, and then for adding to our convenience, and finally for enabling us to enjoy our luxuries. We recognise, of course, that we cannot expect to get these for nothing. Thus we are all engaged in serving one another in some way, and in practice we make our living by contributing our service in some form or shape to others, just as we pay them in return for serving us. None of us are

willing to pay for faulty service, nor yet for things that are no use or that we do not want, but we are quite prepared to pay for good and useful articles or skilful services.

Consequently it is fairly clear that the person whose services are valuable, or whose goods prove themselves, is going to have plenty of work to do in supplying his fellow creatures with what they want. If this man is not incompetent, the business machine enables him to do this at a profit, in other words he makes money. But let this be specially emphasised ; **he makes money because of his valuable service in some way or other to the community, and NOT because he first set out with the prime object of making money.** In other words money-making is not an end in itself, but it is a by-product of successful service to the world at large.

This by-product, as we have termed it, is conditional upon the service being efficient and useful ; and the ensuring of this requires the expenditure of very careful thought.

There can be no point in devoting time and energy to making things that are not required, or to providing articles that nobody wants, so that the basis of successful business is again to be found in the development of intelligent thought. Especially in business do we require good and efficient management, for careless organisation can quickly put an end to any success. **Capital, labour, and efficient management are the trio which bring about profitable business ; and they represent thought specialised in three directions.**

Imagination is a business builder, and the ability to picture people's wants before they themselves are aware of them is one of the characteristics of the man of enterprise. The ability to foresee new openings or fresh developments leads quite naturally to their coming about ; for they can never materialise unless someone first thinks of them. The courage that can take risks is again another product of thought, just as it is dissipated by fears and doubt. But above all the man

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who is to win must have a fine faith in himself and in his work, for in the face of such a strong motive force difficulties go down like ninepins. Faith does indeed remove mountains, but they are chiefly the mountains that other people put up when they say that a particular policy is impossible, doomed to failure, and anyhow not worth trying. Faith can demolish these, and faith is compounded of the calibre of our thoughts, strong and definite.

Honesty is another essential for the consolidation of any business, and in the larger ways of life we take it for granted. Even a stupid man must realise that nothing but honesty can in the long run pay. But there is a sense of square dealing and justice which concerns itself with matters both small as well as great. People who would scorn to take a penny from a man's pocket will cheerfully waste an hour of his time by their lack of punctuality or by giving totally unnecessary trouble ; and they

do not think this dishonest. Oh, no; they scarcely think about it at all. But it matters none the less, and it puts their own business upon a very insecure foundation. We have all noticed that, when the parcel delivery man requests us to sign on his sheet for the goods, the pencil he lends us is fastened with a string. In the absence of the string he would be just as likely to get his pencil back as when we "lend" a box of matches. In quite small ways such as these honesty is frequently far to seek.

Timekeeping is another point in which our ideas are occasionally somewhat unduly elastic. Five minutes late in starting work and five minutes early in preparing to knock off does not seem much, but it means an hour a week, and a week a year. If there are fifty people in the firm doing this it means that one non-existent person is being carried at full rates on the pay-roll. In a firm of five hundred it means ten non-existent workers at full rates. This, of course, is not

only petty dishonesty, but it is very bad business, and it discloses just one of those wastages which it is the aim of efficiency to eliminate. If it is a case of wastes versus profits, it is generally the wastes which come out top.

Tact versus thoughtlessness is yet another business battle that is always being fought. All business by its very basis must be mutual, and there is the other person to be considered. He has feelings and emotions, and it cannot be simply a case of "it's your money we want." The wise policy is ever to make friends, for if we have to make our living out of one another (and there is nobody else) it makes it unnecessarily precarious if we are trying to live on our enemies. It is even difficult to collect a single subscription to a worthy object from them! **To make friends we must be friends. There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and if he also happens to be a customer then the permanence of his custom shows how good feeling has a**

knack of writing itself down as goodwill in the balance sheet.

Due attention to these various points is the mark of the successful business man, and in thinking along these lines he is laying a very sound foundation for the acquisition of wealth as a result of his faithful service. But again, money is not his prime object. Anyone who seeks first the financial gain is almost certain to miss some of these finer points, and in so doing he becomes less of a man than he might be. What he gains on the lower level he more than loses on the higher ; on balance he comes off the worse.

But at the back of all this again is the power of thought ever at work bringing back to us just what we earn, no more and no less ; and the world ceaselessly tests us out and tries us to see what is our mettle. When we have proved that by right vision we have qualified to get wealth, then we are set the higher problem of demonstrating how we can use it. Many who are competent to pass the first test fail at the second ; and

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here once more our thought is the paramount factor. Therefore we can see how vital is the training of the power to think aright, preceding the action, and finally moulding the very life itself.

CHAPTER XII

THOUGHT AND HAPPINESS

OUR third consideration is now the influence of thought upon happiness, which in the nature of things must be earned. This is an ordered universe, run by law, and we live in a world of observed effects which are very often the result of unobserved causes. Life is like some game which must be played according to the rules, and the player who is not acquainted with these will frequently find himself in difficulties. So also we have to learn the rules of the game of life, in order to play it successfully by becoming healthy, useful, and finally happy.

The one prime principle or law, which we might term the basic sustaining force in the universe, is the law of Love; it acts as a consolidating and integrating influence. This

is the positive element which has as its negative the disintegrating and destructive force of Hate ; for Love and Hate are poles apart, like the North and South poles of the one-bar magnet. When we personify these opposites we call them respectively God and the Devil. God ordains and sustains the universe and all that is in it, but the Devil's work is always destruction.

This Love has a hundred forms of manifestation and many names, but they all indicate the same principle and a like mode of action. As gravity, the attraction of mass for mass, which holds the very heavens stable, it is not different from that affection which holds man and woman together, and keeps the family united. As cohesion, which holds the very particles of matter combined so that they manifest solidity, it is the same principle as loyalty within the Firm making for success, or goodwill holding the customers and building the permanence of the business. Call it chemical affinity and it enables diverse elements to combine, or

term it sympathy which makes the whole world kin ; it does not matter what name we use, there is but the one basic force upholding and making for endurance, harmony, and happiness.

Its opposite, Hate, never yet constructed anything save Hell. But over and over again we can see its insidious influence breaking things down, killing love and friendship, turning allies into enemies, introducing discord, sowing unhappiness and reaping the whirlwind. It can poison a man's body, but it can also infect and eventually destroy a business, a party, or a nation with the same impartiality and thoroughness. It accomplishes the Devil's work in striving to overthrow the policies of God.

Yet this is no gospel of despair ; there are not two opposing powers in the universe, any more than that there are two magnets. There is finally but one power, as one magnet ; but when this power becomes operative on this material plane of manifestation it must display this principle of duality and diversity

in order that men may learn by demonstration the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, God and the Devil. Even we ourselves, as spirits, must for a while live confronted by the resistances of matter, that we may prove all things and hold fast that which is good. When finally the material plane is left behind and we get within hailing distance of the ultimate reality, the duality itself is transcended, and only the original unity remains. But apart from questions of philosophy the fact of the existence of these two polarities of Love and Hate is self-evident.

Nobody in his sane senses would knowingly elect to run his life by the gospel of hate, for he himself would be the first sufferer and his work could not possibly come to any final success. A wicked man must ultimately find his calculations wrong. Yet if we rightly choose the positive of Love, even that is a weapon which can be wielded in two directions, either centrifugally outwards, or centripetally inwards. In other words it can be directed out

towards others in the gospel of service, or inwards towards self and self-interest. These again show the same principle of polarity at work.

The effect of turning it outwards is to enlarge both the life and the happiness by identifying ourselves with the interests and successes of others. Turning it inwards contracts both the personality and the prospects until they become negligible. A degree of sheer horse sense compels the ordinary person to awaken to some recognition of this fact from experience, and to align his life and conduct accordingly ; but it is a vastly different thing when a man realises that such a principle as this exists as a kind of natural and moral law in the universe. If he be wise he will then endeavour to live within the law and conform to its dictates, not indeed because he is compelled to do so, but because he realises that only in love, service, and unselfishness can he hope to find happiness and discover the meaning of his days.

The law is completely impersonal and

impartial, and its effects follow inexorably upon the causes which man himself sets in motion. Ignorance is no excuse. But just as the proverb says that "even a worm will turn," so even a stupid man who is up against things that continually go wrong for him will at length begin to wonder where he has gone wrong himself. It does not necessarily follow that he will have been hammered sufficiently for this in one short existence, but it is at least conceivable that there may be other existences. However, as soon as our friend does begin to think, the very object of his difficulties is on the way to being achieved. **Troubles are not vindictive, but remedial, and in the long run kindly, because they put us on the right road for our soul's progress. And it is this that finally matters.**

We are, therefore, given the choice between hate which spells trouble, or Love which brings harmony ; this is the essential heart and pith of the matter. Yet life itself as we live it to-day is such a complicated business

that things do not always work out with this pristine simplicity, and therefore it is all the more necessary that we should see behind the smoke-screen of events to the vital principles at work. Then even if things seem complicated and perverse we can still hold to our vision and help difficulties to come right. We have also to remember that the element of time is involved and that though we ourselves may be in a great hurry yet events, policies, and people, themselves take time to grow and unfold. We cannot expedite the harvest of these any more than we can hasten the growth of the fields.

This time element further comes in because life is a long-distance event, and not a short sprint ; and it is staying-power that counts. The tide comes in, but there may be eddies that at the moment are swirling out ; on the short or local view the water flows in one direction whereas in point of fact the main stream flows in the other, and time will prove this. Therefore for a while we may be below or above our true level, or temporarily

we may be seemingly unfortunate in order that better happiness may come to us; to-day we may endure a loss which will result in greater gain to-morrow. As seafarers on the ocean of life we must be brave enough to take the rough with the smooth, all the time improving the quality of our seamanship; but the fixed star by which we steer our course is this great principle that Love brings happiness and hate destroys.

When we decide to work with this law it is as if a swimmer goes with the stream, when every particle of the stream assists him; but if we choose otherwise, then it is like pitting our strength against the current and we do but exhaust ourselves to no purpose. Love energises the body and assists all the nutritious exchanges, enabling it to work like a sweet-running machine without friction. In the realm of mind it makes subjects open out to us in a wonderful way, just as when we hate them they close up. In the same way people themselves

open out to us where they feel our sympathy, and keep themselves to themselves when they have their doubts about it. There is ever a very subtle influence working behind the scenes, and even if we laugh at it or disregard it, the effects nevertheless make themselves felt.

On the spiritual side nothing whatever can be accomplished outside this law. We are told that "love is the fulfilling of the law," and the statement puts Love as the prime and fundamental law, not merely as one of many. It has, we admit, a thousand derivatives and applications, but its main thesis leads us direct to spiritual principles which are the essence of life. We start, therefore, in our consideration of the power of thought, with the simplest beginning of training the senses; as it were, we place the ladder of achievement with its feet firmly planted on the solid ground. As we ascend, step by step, we find that our vision widens and things begin to become more clear as we see the further steps before us.

It may be long ere we reach the top of the ladder, but it is not long before we realise that we are indeed rising to greater heights than formerly. We feel our growing powers, and we experience the stabilising effect of knowledge and understanding. There are many problems still in front of us and there will doubtless be many more, but they are not intractable and need not dismay us. The top of the ladder is as yet far beyond our ken, but the same power which has taken us so far will surely enable us to climb whatever steps there be, because the law is on our side. And finally, God is love, and if He be for us, who can be against us?